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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1062
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1267

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, OAU, GB, DM
SUBJ: BENINESE SUPPORT OAU EFFORTS ON REPATRIATES

REF: LIBREVILLE 2400 (NOTAL)

1. DESPITE INCESSANT AND VITRIOLIC DENUNCIATIONS OF THE "PUPPET" BONGO, THE BENINESE APPEAR EAGER FOR A FACE-TO-FAIS ENCOKUTERHZITH GABONESE OFFICIALS -- AT LEVEL SHORT OF CHIEF OF STATE -- UNDER OAU AUSPIPX . IN A LONG RESUME OF A WEEKEND MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE DEVOTED TO ABORTIVE CONAKRY RECONCILIATION MEETING, THE SEMI-OFFICIAL EHUZU LAYS BLAME SQUARELY AT DOORSTEP OF GABON, DETAILS GPRB INTEREST IN VARIOUS PREVIOUS RECONCILIATION ATTEMPTS, PRAISES NIGERIA AND OAU SECGEN ONU FOR EFFORTS ON THE PART OF THE REPATRIATES, AND INDICATES THE GOVERNMENT'S WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT FOR THE CONFIDENTIAL

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OAU'S FURTHER ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE THE DISPUTE.

2. THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE BENINESE FOR AN OAU-SPONSORED PALAVER -- SCARCLY CONCEALED BEHIND CONTINUING RHETORICAL BLASTS AT GABON AND PROTESTATIONS OF INJURY -- SEEMS TO STEM FROM THE FEELING THAT THEY CAN ONLY GAIN SYMPATHY FROM AFRICAN CONSIDER-ATION OF THEIR CAUSE. ACCORDING TO

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THECENTRAL COMMITTEE COMM-
UNIQUE, THE CENTRAL ISSUE OF ANY CONFERENCE MUST BE THE DIS-
CUSSION OF "JUST AND APPROPRIATE SOLUTIONS" FOR THE BENINESE
REPATRIATED "UNDER ATROCIOUS AND INHUMAN CONDITIONS." SINCE
PAST EXPERIENCE HAS AMPLY PROVEN THE GOVERNMENT'S TALENT FOR
INFLATING SMALL AMOUNTS OF DAMAGE INTO ASTRONOMICAL CLAIMS,
BENIN MAY WELL USE THE CONFERENCE TABLE AS A VEHICLE FOR

DEMANDING LARGE REPARATIONS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE COMMUNIQUE
INDICATES THAT THE GOVERNMENT MAY ATTEMPT TO DISCUSS AT ANY
FUTURE MEETING WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE THE FUNDAMENTAL DISPUTE
BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, THE 1977 MERCENARY INVASION. IN
ANY CASE, THE BENINESE LINED UP FOR NOW WITH NIGERIA AND WITH
BROTHER RADICAL REGIMES ON WHAT THEY CONSIDER THE RIGHT SIDE
OF THE ISSUE, APPEARS INTEGRATED IN A PROPAGANDA EXERCISE
AS IN A GENUINE ATTEMPT AT RECONCILIATION. INDEED, THE EHUZU
ARTICLE POINTEDLY ATTEMPTED TO DEPICT THE GABONESE REFUSAL TO
ATTEND THE CONAKRY MEETING AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF BONGO'S CONTEMPT
FOR THE OAU'S ACTIVITIES, A STATE OF AFFAIRS IN SHARP CONTRAST
WITH BENIN'S SELF-PROCLAIMED SUPPORT FOR THE ORGANIZATION.
DAVISON

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